Symptoms, Testing, and Positive Cases
Parent FAQ
Last Update: December 15, 2020

1. **When should you keep your child home?**
   Pennsylvania's Department of Health and the Hopewell Area School District ask that you keep your child home, if your child:

   - Has one or more of the following symptoms: *Cough, Shortness of Breath, Difficulty Breathing, New olfactory disorder, New taste disorder*
   OR
   - Has two or more symptoms: *Fever (Measured or Subjective), Chills, Rigors (or shivering associated with a rise in temperature), Myalgia (or muscle pains or muscle aches), Headache, Sore Throat, Diarrhea, Fatigue, Congestion or Runny Nose, Nausea or Vomiting*
   OR
   - Is taking fever reducing medication

   Please note, if your child has a fever above 100.4, he or she is NOT to attend school. If the fever presents with other symptoms as it relates to COVID-19, it will be very important for you to follow the guidance established in the chart above; otherwise, the fever protocol of 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medication will go into effect. Please contact your school nurse if you need further direction. *Please notify your school nurse if your child is at home sick.

2. **When does a Hopewell student get sent home by the nurse from school due to COVID-19 symptoms?**
   *A student will be sent home by the school nurse if the student has a fever **OR** one COVID-19 symptom from Group A **OR** two COVID-19 symptoms from Group B (see below).*

   Group A: 1 or more symptoms
   Cough
   Shortness of Breath
   Difficulty Breathing
   New olfactory disorder
   New taste disorder

   Group B: 2 or more symptoms
   Fever (Measured or Subjective)
   Chills
   Rigors (or shivering associated with a rise in temperature)
   Myalgia (or muscle pains or muscle aches)
   Headache
   Sore Throat
   Diarrhea
   Fatigue
   Congestion or Runny Nose
   Nausea or Vomiting
   Diarrhea

3. **What to do if there is a positive COVID-19 case in my home?**

   - Call your physician or healthcare provider for instructions.
   - Set up virtual visit if needed.
   - Monitor symptoms.
   - Report any positive results to the school nurse if tested.
   - Stay in touch with the school nurse with any updates.
   - Obtain a Return to School Excuse Form.
   - Call the school nurse *before* you plan on sending your child back to school.

4. **What needs to happen for a sick student who is sent home by the nurse to return to in-person learning?**
   Students must have a release from a medical provider OR remain out of school for 10 consecutive days. Students do not need to be tested for COVID-19, unless required by a medical provider or identified as a close contact. If a family chooses to have their child tested for COVID-19, they can submit the result to the school nurse. A rapid COVID-19 test result **will not** be accepted without a medical provider's clearance. **See answer to question 16 below.**

5. **When are siblings sent home?**
   Asymptomatic siblings are sent home out of an abundance of caution. Asymptomatic siblings are able to return when the sick sibling is cleared by a medical provider to return. Asymptomatic siblings do not need to be seen by a medical provider to return to school. They can return to school under their siblings' medical excuse.

6. **How does my household quarantine?**
   Quarantine begins after the date of last exposure (Day 0) to a person with COVID-19 who is infectious **(See answer to question 11 below)**. For persons with COVID-19 who cannot isolate from their household members, the household members' quarantine period cannot begin until *after* the COVID-19 case is no longer infectious (10 days from symptom onset).

   If other individuals without a history of contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case reside in your home, you should plan for them to stay elsewhere during your quarantine period. If this is not possible, you should remain in a separate bedroom, away from shared spaces. You should not share drinks or personal care items. You should also practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

7. **What is the difference between testing positive and being a probable case? Does the District treat these cases differently?**
   A positive case means that an individual tested positive for COVID-19. A probable case is a case where the individual is considered a close contact and has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 **AND** is exhibiting symptoms. A medical provider will often identify this person as a probable case and may or may not require a COVID-19 test. The District handles both probable cases and positive cases the same.

8. **How will the District communicate with families regarding a positive or probable case in our District?**

The District will send a phone blast to families and post a letter on the blue banner on the website. Phone blasts are also posted on the District webpage on the left hand side under the "Phone Blast" tab. Should a parent have any particular concerns after reading the parent letter, the parent should contact the school nurse or the principal. Communication via a letter and phone blast will occur the same day that the information is confirmed.

9. **How will the District communicate with staff regarding a positive or probable case in our District?**
Administration sends an email to staff and posts the communication in work rooms for employees who do not have direct access to email. Communication with staff will occur the same day that the information is confirmed.

10. **If a staff or student is positive for COVID-19, do they have to have a negative test to return to work/school?**
No. An individual who is positive must fulfill the required isolation for the period of time established by Pennsylvania's Department of Health. Typically, this is 10 days from symptom onset or 10 days from when the test was administered if asymptomatic.

11. **What is a "close contact"?**

   Effective 12/4/20 - Pennsylvania's Department of Health recommends the following alternative options to a 14-day quarantine:

   A close contact is defined as an individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (masked or unmasked) starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. *Please notify your school nurse if your child is identified as a close contact.*

   Option 1: Student is to quarantine for 10 days, from the date of the last exposure, *without* being COVID tested. Their quarantine period ends after 10 days **provided they are symptom free during the entire time.**

   <div align="center">**OR**</div>

   Option 2: Student is to quarantine for 7 days *and receive a negative PCR test on or after day 5* of quarantine. Their quarantine period ends after day 7 **provided they are symptom free the entire time** and a negative PCR test was obtained after day 5.

12. *Who is responsible for contact tracing? And what should a parent expect from DOH and contact tracing?*

   The DOH has stated that they are responsible for contact tracing, however, the District will work to support families and DOH. The District supports DOH's contact tracing by identifying close contacts who were in school with the individual who tested positive within a given time period.

   Upon receiving knowledge that an individual tested positive or is identified as a probable case, the District immediately will identify who was in close contact with the individual during school 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms **OR** 48 hours prior to the individual's positive COVID-19 test.

The District will notify those in "close contact" and provide close contact names and contact information to the Department of Health. The District will provide guidance as to what the family may expect from DOH, with the understanding that DOH is the authority in requiring isolation or quarantine. The District will also direct the individual or family when the close contact may be permitted to return to school.

In Beaver County, district superintendents are reporting that communication to close contacts by DOH varies. Some have reported same day communication, while others report that DOH has never contacted the close contacts.

13. *If a student is identified as positive, what does the District do?*
    ❏ Confirmation of positive results.
    ❏ Confirmation of the last day the individual was in the building.
    ❏ Contact with DOH. Review of all known data. Communicate with identified close contacts.
    ❏ Direction to custodial staff to disinfect identified areas.
    ❏ Follow directions of DOH.
    ❏ Notify the school community via phone blast and letter.
    ❏ Notify faculty and staff via email/memo.
    ❏ Cancellation of school and activities is reviewed by DoH. If necessary, the district would close building(s) and/or district.

14. **If a teacher's child or spouse is positive, is the teacher required to stay away from the school?**

    If a teacher's child or spouse is positive, that would make the teacher a close contact of a positive case. The teacher would need to quarantine for either 10 or 7 days (see answer to question 10) unless he/she becomes symptomatic. The length of time needing to isolate or quarantine is case by case dependent. The administrative team and school nurse will work close together with the staff member to ensure a safe return to school.

15. **If a teacher is identified as a close contact and has to quarantine, do the students in his/her class have to quarantine?**

    No. Students of a teacher who is identified as a close contact would NOT have to quarantine. Students and staff who were around the teacher would be considered a "secondary contact". DOH is not requiring or recommending secondary contacts have to quarantine.

16. **What are the cleaning procedures after a student or staff member are identified as positive or probable positive?**

    Each month, the District will apply Bactronix to each building. This includes all common spaces, restrooms, libraries, hallways, etc. This is a 30-day disinfecting treatment that kills organisms and prevents regrowth. It will also be reapplied if there is a positive or probable positive COVID-19 case associated with a learning space or school bus. When there is a student sent home by the nurse, the daylight custodian disinfects the student's seating area in the classroom.

17. **Does the District accept Rapid COVID-19 Tests for Children?**
    The state has provided clinics and other medical providers rapid COVID tests. We understand that they are 80+% accurate, although this statistic varies among the medical providers. At this time, we are not accepting a rapid COVID-19 test for re-entry of students who have been ill and sent home by a school nurse.

We are continuing with a release from a medical provider or 10 consecutive days out of school. We have not received guidance from DOH as to whether schools should accept rapid tests for students. CHOPs has been the only medical provider to make recommendations. They have said (provided in email from BVIU on 10/22/20):

- *There was a great deal of discussion among our ID team as well as primary care physicians. It turns out, there is not an easy Yes/No answer to this question.*
- *None of the physicians are comfortable accepting rapid antigen tests for school re-entry and here is why:*
  - *Lack of pediatric data.*
  - *Rapid tests are less sensitive than PCR-based tests.*
  - *Potential variability in the performance of antigen tests.*
  - *Pre-test probability for a given child being evaluated and tested, (i.e., a child with known exposure has cough, fever, and loss of taste/smell but receives a negative antigen test as evidence to return to school). They would not be comfortable with this child returning to school.*
  - *Assessment of antigen testing in the pediatric population is currently underway. This will give us more data on which to base a more definitive response to this question and I will share the results of this with you as soon as they become available.*

18. What do I do if my family is going on a vacation or traveling over the holidays?

If a family or student is planning to travel please be informed of the order issued by the Secretary of Health regarding requirements for re-entry to the state of Pennsylvania. Travelers over age 11 entering Pennsylvania from locations outside the Commonwealth, including Pennsylvanians who are returning home from locations outside the Commonwealth, **should produce evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken 72 hours before your return OR place themselves in travel quarantine for 10 days upon entering without a test or 7 day quarantine with a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken on or after day 5 of return, providing you maintain symptom free.** The day you return is day 0, then you count forward the recommended quarantine period.

- **To reduce confusion, this will apply to all students in the Jr. High and Sr. High schools**

- **If someone cannot get a test or chooses not to, they must quarantine for 10 days upon arrival in Pennsylvania.**

View the complete amended travel requirements dated 12/4/2020 at the website below:
https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx#:~:text=The%20Secretary%20of%20Health%20issued,in%20quarantine%20for%2010%20days

19. **Is travel quarantine the same as quarantine when in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19?**

No, the travel quarantine is separate and distinct from the isolation required when an individual tests positive for COVID-19 or the quarantine required when an individual has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. This means individuals quarantining after travel, who have not been identified as a close contact, are permitted to stop quarantine once they receive a negative test result. Individuals in quarantine because they are a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 may not end quarantine early even with a negative test result.

Additional Facts about COVID-19 from PA Department of Health

1. Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity. Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

2. For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low. Some people may have an increased risk for more serious complications from COVID-19 and should take measures to protect themselves.

3. Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

4. There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.
   a. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
   b. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
   c. Stay home when you are sick.
   d. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

If you tested positive for COVID-19
Your test results are reported to the PA DOH/CMHDs via the PA National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (PA-NEDSS). From there, they will be kept confidential and maintained by the PA DOH/CMHD staff.

If you were exposed to COVID-19
A contact tracer will receive your information because someone diagnosed with COVID-19 told a contact tracer that you were in close contact with them during their infectious period.

If I am considered a close contact, what should I do?
- Stay home and maintain social distancing through the end of your quarantine period.
- Monitor yourself daily for symptoms of COVID-19, including checking your temperature.
- Be aware that you could possibly spread the infection to others, even if you do not feel sick.
- If you feel worse, immediately call your healthcare provider and see if you should be tested for COVID-19. If you do not have a health care provider, call the nearest hospital or urgent care to schedule an appointment.

What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?
An individual will be in **isolation** if they are diagnosed as a case of COVID-19 and are asked to stay home, in a hospital or care facility to ensure they do not expose others with COVID-19.

An individual should **quarantine** if they are at-risk for contracting the virus. Quarantining is suggested for those traveling to/from areas with high positivity rates for COVID-19 or if they were in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case. Quarantine lasts 14 days to provide enough time for a full incubation period to pass.

Other Important Terms to Know:
- A **case** is a patient who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. This person should isolate themselves, meaning they should stay away from other people who are not sick to avoid spreading the illness.

- A **contact** is an individual who had close contact while the case patient was infectious. This person should quarantine themselves, meaning they should stay at home to limit community exposure and watch to see if symptoms develop.

- A **close contact** is an individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

- A **contact of a contact** is an individual who had or continues to have close contact with a contact. This person should take everyday preventive actions, like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and cleaning surfaces frequently, however quarantine is not necessary. This person should also be alert for symptoms.